

Clipping, February 25, 1914

BELL FIRST TO RECOMMEND THE RADIUM REMEDY Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Feb. 25, 1914

Famous Inventor Suggested Cancer Cure in 1903.

EXPERIMENTS MADE LATER

Letter from Dr. Bell to Washington Physician Recorded in Medical Journal Several Years Before Actual Treatments Were Started

Special Dispatch to Democrat and Chronicle.

Washington, Feb. 24.—Washington physicians are wondering if Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone and former president of the National Geographic Society, was not the first person to suggest the imbedding of radium in bodily tissue as a curative agent for deep-seated cancers. They have discovered a copy of "Science," of July 31, 1903, in which is a letter written by Dr. Bell to Dr. Z. T. Sowers, of Washington, dated July 21, 1903, which they believe to contain the first suggestion for the application of radium in the way that the most recent experiments in the world's scientific centers have proved most beneficial. The letter also appeared in the Scientific American of Sept. 12, 1903. The letter written in Baddeck, N. S., nearly eleven years ago, follows:

Dear Dr. Sowers:

I understand from you that the Roentgen X-rays and the rays emitted by radium, have been found to have a marked curative effect upon external cancers, but that the effects upon deep-seated cancers have thus far proved unsatisfactory. It has occurred to me that one reason for the unsatisfactory nature of these latter experiments arises from the fact

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that the rays have been applied externally, thus having to pass through healthy tissues of various depths in order to reach the cancerous matter.

The Crooks tube from which the Roentgen rays are emitted is of course too bulky to be admitted into the middle of the mass of cancer, but there is no reason why a tiny fragment of radium sealed up in a glass tube should not be into the very heart of the cancer, this acting directly upon the diseased materials. Would it not be worth while making experiments along this line?

Very Valuable Suggestion.

Dr. Sowers reply follows:

Dear Dr. Bell:

The suggestion which you make in regard to the application of the radium rays to the substances of deep-seated cancer. I regard as very valuable. If such experiments should be made. I have no doubt they would prove successful in many cases where we now have failures.

When the letters were called to the attention of Dr. Bell by physicians here recently, he modestly declined to claim that his was the first suggestion. He added, however, that should an investigation prove this to be the case nothing would please him more.

While medical men here have not made an exhaustive search to find if Dr. Bell was the originator of the "imbedding tissue" idea, they believe that actual work along this line did not occur until three or four years later. They cite an article, written by Dr. William H. Dieffenbach, of New York, in the Medical Record of December 13, 1913, in which the early steps in the employment of radium as a curative agent are described. Dr. Dieffenbach tells of securing a tube of radium bromide of 1.80??90 activity in 1902 and of additions being made to this amount later. In 1906, he says, solutions of 25,000 activity of radium

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were dissolved in gelatine, the object being to use an animal product as a vehicle for disseminating radium within tissues by means of injections. The physician, one of the pioneers in this line, fails to state exactly when the actual imbedding of radium itself first took place. While they have not been able to find exact data on the subject, physicians in the office of the surgeon-general of the War Department are of the opinion that Dr. Bell's suggestion was the first of its kind to be made.

Rochester, NY. Democrat & Chronicle 2/25 (1914?)